

In the claims:

For the convenience of the Examiner, all claims being examined, whether or not amended, are presented below.

Claims 1-17 **(withdrawn)**

Claim 18. **(Previously amended)** A tissue culture comprising a blood vessel having endothelial cells which have been recombinantly engineered to express endoglin protein or Alk-1 protein encoded by an exogenously supplied polynucleotide, whereby expression of said endoglin or Alk-1 protein promotes TGF β signal transduction in said cells in response to a TGF β ligand.

Claim 19. **(Original)** A blood vessel in accordance with claim 18, wherein the vessel is a section of a mammalian vein.

Claim 20. **(Original)** A blood vessel in accordance with claim 19, wherein the vessel is a section of a human vein.

Claim 21. **(Original)** A blood vessel in accordance with claim 20, wherein the vessel is a section of a saphenous vein.

Claim 22. **(Cancelled)**

Claim 23. **(Cancelled)**

Claim 24. **(Previously added)** The blood vessel of claim 18, wherein said exogenously supplied polynucleotide is contained within an expression vector.

Claim 25. **(Previously added)** The blood vessel of claim 24, wherein said expression vector is a viral vector.

Claim 26. **(Previously added)** The blood vessel of claim 25, wherein said viral vector is selected from an adenoviral vector, a retroviral vector, a herpesviral vector, a pox viral vector, or an adeno-associated viral vector.